

October 7, 1954

Dr. David Rittenberg
Department of Biochemistry
Columbia University College of Physicians and Surgeons
New York 32, N.Y.

Dear Dave:

Thank you for your letter of the 4th. Of course I would be delighted to accept your invitation. Unfortunately, I hardly ever find myself in New York City, and could not predict, at the moment, when the next occasion would be. When an opportunity does come up, I'll let you know in time to confirm the arrangement.

It was good to see you again at Woods Hole. I have thought a little, as you asked, about your suggested conference on "organization". I do not find myself any more optimistic about the probable benefits than I was then. I do not think that a conference limited in time and scope can do much to break down the communication barriers. But isn't this what one of the functions of a University should be: a community of scholars in different fields. Surely Columbia University has resources broad enough so that an intramural "seminar" (not quite the right description) would make the same progress. I know how hard it is to communicate with one's own colleagues, but if you don't achieve the full benefit from contacts that can be continued over a long time, I think the prospects of a special conference would be even less. Such a group could, I think, then ~~use~~ use a little financial help much more effectively to import occasional outside guests who would have some special stimulation for you. Please don't read any special connection between this suggestion and the first paragraph above.

Yours sincerely,

Joshua Lederberg